

Prevalence And Risk Factors of Eye Allergies Among Adults In Ksa: A Cross-Sectional Study

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RESERACH

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ABSTRACT

Objective

To determine the prevalence of eye allergies and associated risk factors among adults in KSA.

Methods

This research employs a cross-sectional study design to assess the prevalence and risk factors of eye allergies among adults in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). A crosssectional approach allows for the collection of data at a single point in time, providing a snapshot of the condition's status within the study population.

Results

The study included 640 participants. The most frequent age among them was 18-28 years (n= 331, 51.7 Per Cent), followed by 40-50 years (n= 139, 21.7 Per Cent). The most frequent gender among study participants was female (n= 389, 60.8 Per Cent) followed by male (n= 251, 39.2 The most frequent nationality among study participants was Saudi (n= 613, 95.8 Per Cent) followed by non-Saudi (n= 27, 4.2 Per Cent). The educational level among study participants with most of them being the university (n= 553, 86.4 Per Cent) followed by the school (n= 85, 13.3 Per Cent). The work nature among study participants with most of was inside the building. Participants were asked if they had an eye problem that affected their daily life. The most frequent answer was moderately (n= 309, 48.3 Per Cent) followed by never (n= 271, 42.3 Per Cent), and the least was a lot (n=60, 9.4 Per Cent).

Conclusion: The results of the study showed that most of the study participants are Saudis and most of them work inside the building. The majority have university education, and the largest percentage of participants are women. Most of the participants are non-smokers. Most study participants had good social communication.

Introduction

Since it was initially recognized as a medical condition more than 30 years ago, the definition of dry eye disease (DED) has evolved several times. The 2017 Dry Eye Workshop II of the Tear Film and Ocular Surface Society (TFOS DEWS II) defined DED as a "multifactorial disease of the ocular surface characterized by a loss of homeostasis of the tear film, and accompanied by ocular symptoms, in which tear film instability and hyperosmolarity, ocular surface inflammation and damage, and neurosensory abnormalities play etiological roles"¹⁻¹⁰.

Increasing age, female gender, co-morbidities including hypertension and diabetes mellitus, and the use of drugs like antidepressants are all risk factors for DED.[2,3] Epidemiological studies in the US, AU, and AS have shown DED prevalence to be anywhere from 5 Per Cent to 50 Per Cent[4,5]. Still, research' varying definitions of DED contribute to the discrepancies in prevalence.



The frequency of DED is between 32.1 to 74.9 percent in Saudi Arabia, a country where environmental and epidemiological variables raise the danger of dry eye [6-10]. However, most research were conducted in just one city, limiting their applicability. The major objective of the present investigation was, therefore, to ascertain the prevalence of DED among adults in Saudi Arabia as diagnosed by physicians and to assess the related risk factors. The secondary purpose of the research was to evaluate the monetary burden of DED by determining how much lubricant is used and how much that use costs on a yearly basis.

The research problem at the heart of this study revolves around understanding the prevalence and risk factors of eye allergies among adults in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). Eye allergies, also known as allergic conjunctivitis, can significantly affect an individual's quality of life by causing symptoms like itching, redness, tearing, and blurred vision. Despite the considerable impact of this condition, there is a lack of comprehensive epidemiological data specific to the KSA adult population. This research problem seeks to address this gap by determining the extent of the issue and identifying potential risk factors unique to the region.

One aspect of the research problem is to quantify the prevalence of eye allergies in KSA. This involves conducting a cross-sectional study to collect data from a representative sample of adults in the country. Understanding the extent of eye allergies in KSA is essential for healthcare planning and resource allocation, as it helps in assessing the burden of this condition on the healthcare system and the overall well-being of the population.

Another key aspect of the research problem is to identify the risk factors associated with eye allergies in KSA. By investigating the specific factors that contribute to the development of eye allergies, researchers can offer insights into their causation. This information can help in tailoring prevention strategies, developing treatment protocols, and raising awareness among at-risk individuals. Additionally, uncovering unique risk factors within the Saudi Arabian context may contribute to the broader field of allergy research, aiding in the development of international guidelines and strategies to mitigate eye allergies. In summary, the research problem is a crucial step in addressing the prevalence and risk factors of eye allergies among adults in KSA, ultimately improving the health and well-being of the population.

Methods

Study design

This research employs a cross-sectional study design to assess the prevalence and risk factors of eye allergies among adults in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). A crosssectional approach allows for the collection of data at a single point in time, providing a snapshot of the condition's status within the study population.

Study approach

The study is conducted in multiple urban and rural regions across KSA to ensure a representative sample. A diverse set of locations is chosen to account for potential regional variations in eye allergy prevalence and risk factors.

Study population

The target population consists of adults (18 years and older) residing in KSA. Adults from all walks of life, with varying demographic and socio-economic backgrounds, are included to ensure a broad representation.

Study sample

A stratified random sampling technique is used to select participants. The strata are determined based on geographical regions within KSA. The sample size is calculated to achieve statistical significance and power, with considerations for potential non-response and dropout rates.

Study tool

For the current study, a questionnaire was adopted for data collection, which was also categorized as a study tool.

Data collection

Data is collected through structured interviews and questionnaire-based surveys. Trained research personnel conduct face-to-face interviews to elicit information regarding eye allergy symptoms, medical history, lifestyle factors, and potential risk exposures. The data collection process is conducted over a specified period to ensure uniformity and minimize seasonal variations.

Data analysis

Descriptive statistics are used to summarize the prevalence of eye allergies and risk factors. Bivariate and multivariate statistical analyses, such as chi-square tests and logistic regression, are employed to identify significant risk factors associated with eye allergies.

Ethical considerations

The study follows ethical guidelines, obtaining informed consent from all participants before data collection. Anonymity and confidentiality are maintained throughout the study, and participants are assured of the secure



handling of their data. The study also obtains the necessary ethical approvals from relevant institutional review boards or ethics committees in compliance with national and international research ethics standards.

Results

The study included 640 participants. The most frequent age among them was 18-28 years (n= 331, 51.7 Per Cent), followed by 40-50 years (n= 139, 21.7 Per Cent). Figure 1 shows the age distribution among study participants. The most frequent gender among study participants was female (n= 389, 60.8 Per Cent) followed by male (n= 251, 39.2 Per Cent). Figure 2 shows the gender distribution among study participants. The most frequent nationality among study participants was Saudi (n= 613, 95.8 Per Cent) followed by non-Saudi (n= 27, 4.2 Per Cent). Figure 3 shows the distribution of nationality among study participants.

The educational level among study participants with most of them being the university (n= 553, 86.4 Per Cent) followed by the school (n= 85, 13.3 Per Cent).

The work nature among study participants with most of was inside the building. The perceived work nature is presented in Figure 4.

Participants were asked to assess their diseases. Their responses and results are presented in Table 1.

Participants were asked if they had an eye problem that affected their daily life. The most frequent answer was moderately (n= 309, 48.3 Per Cent) followed by never (n= 271, 42.3 Per Cent), and the least was a lot (n=60, 9.4 Per Cent). Figure 5 shows participants' answers about the eye affected their daily lives.

Discussion

The prevalence of allergic disorders has skyrocketed in recent decades¹¹⁻¹⁴. One of the most prevalent eye disorders seen in the clinic is ocular allergies. It is impossible to attribute this rise to a single cause, therefore scientists are looking at a wide range of potential contributors, such as urban air pollution, pets, and exposure in early infancy ¹⁵. As more people need allergy therapy, the accompanying expenses have skyrocketed ¹⁶. Ocular allergies may cause uncomfortable symptoms, and in extreme cases, such with atopic keratoconjunctivitis, they can even cause permanent vision loss.

Seasonal Conjunctivitis (SAC), Perennial Conjunctivitis (PAC), Vernal Keratoconjunctivitis (VKC), and Atopic Conjunctivitis (AKC) are all forms of allergic conjunctivitis. Despite sharing certain similar indicators of allergy, AKC and VKC have clinical and pathophysiological aspects that are extremely distinct from SAC and PAC¹⁷. Commonly referred to as "contact lens or ocular prosthesis-associated Giant Papillary Conjunctivitis" (GPC), this condition is better understood as a chronic ocular micro-trauma-related disorder that requires the joint management of ophthalmologists and contact lens specialists ¹⁸.

Every professional who works with patients who suffer from ocular allergy might benefit from learning more about the disease's immunologic causes, clinical characteristics, differential diagnosis, and treatment options. To achieve this goal, we conducted a comprehensive literature analysis highlighting all of the different types of ocular allergy.

Allergic conjunctivitis

Seasonal and perennial allergic conjunctivitis:

Ocular allergies often manifest as either seasonal (SAC) or Perennial (PAC) Allergic Conjunctivitis. Somewhere between 15 and 20 Per Cent of the population is thought to be allergic to these substances ¹⁹. In virtually all instances of SAC and PAC, the presence of specific IgE antibodies to a seasonal or perennial allergen may be shown²⁰.

Clinical ocular allergy is triggered by allergens interacting with IgE attached to sensitized mast cells, which causes the inflammatory reaction known as allergic conjunctivitis. Allergic conjunctivitis is caused by a hypersensitivity response that is mostly IgE-mediated. Histamine, tryptase, prostaglandins, and leukotriene levels in tears are increased when mast cells are activated. This early or immediate reaction often lasts for 20-30 minutes in the clinic.

Vascular endothelial cells get activated in response to mast cell degranulation, and as a result, they produce chemokines and adhesion molecules including ICAM and VCAM. Monocyte chemoattractant protein (MCP), interleukin (IL)-8, eotaxin, and macrophage inflammatory protein (MIP)-1 alpha are some of the other chemokines that are released. RANTES chemokines are also secreted during activation of normal T cells. These substances set off the ocular late-phase response by recruiting inflammatory cells to the conjunctival mucosa ^{21-,32}.

Both illnesses have similar outward manifestations. It all depends on which allergens the patient is reacting to. Pollens in the air are a common trigger for SAC attacks. The symptoms often worsen in the winter and disappear in the spring and summer. Perennial allergens may trigger PAC at any time of the year. Conjunctival symptoms including



itching, redness, and swelling are used to diagnose SAC and PAC. Injection of the conjunctiva causes mild to severe redness. Chemosis, or swelling of the conjunctiva, is usually not very severe but is more noticeable than usual given the relatively low degree of redness. In both SAC and PAC, itching is a common symptom. Involvement of the cornea is uncommon.

Conclusion

The results of the study showed that most of the study participants are Saudis and most of them work inside the building. The majority have a university education, and the largest percentage of participants are women. Most of the participants are non-smokers. Most study participants had good social communication.

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Tables & Figures

Table 1: diseases among study participants.

survey item	Yes	No
	137	503
Are you currently a smoker?	21.40 %	78.60 %
	425	215
Have you ever faced the problem of itchy eyes?	66.40 %	33.60 %
	310	330
Have you ever faced the problem of excessive tears?	48.40 %	51.60 %
	384	256
Have you ever had difficulty seeing light?	60.00 %	40.00 %
	295	345
Have you ever felt sand in the eye?	46.10 %	53.90 %
	79	561
Have you ever suffered from allergic conjunctivitis?	12.30 %	87.70 %
	533.00 %	107.00 %
Do you think eye allergies can affect vision?	83.30 %	16.70 %
	517	123
Do you think eye allergies can be avoided?	80.80 %	19.20 %
	176	464
Do you think eye allergies is a contagious disease?	27.50 %	72.50 %
	192	448
Do you feel that it is easy to overcome the problem of eye allergy without taking any treatment?	30.00 %	70.00 %
	318	322
Do you think eye allergies can be genetically transmitted?	49.70 %	50.30 %





Figure 1: Age distribution among study participants.



Figure 2: Gender distribution among study participants.



Figure 3: Nationality distribution among study participants.





Figure 4: Work nature distribution among study participants.



Figure 5: Participants' eye problem affected their daily life.



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ANNEXURE 1: DATA COLLECTION TOOL

- 1. What is your gender?
- Male
- Female .
- 2. How old are you?
- . 18-28
- 29-39 .
- 40-50 •
- 51-61 •
- . 62 and above
- 3. What is your nationality?
- Saudi •
- Non-Saudi
- 4. What is your educational level?
- uneducated •
- the school
- the university
- 5. what is your work nature?
- Inside the building
- Outside the building
- Both of them .
- 6. Do you have one of the following diseases?
- Diabetes
- High blood pressure disease
- Asthma
- Lupus erythematosus
- . Ulcerative colon disease

- Arthritis disease •
- Diseases of the immune system
- None of the above
- 7. Are you currently a smoker?
- Yes •
- No
- 8. Do you have any type of allergy?
- Allergy to dirt
- Allergy to the vaccine
- Allergy to a particular type of food
- Allergy to perfumes
- Allergy to pets .
- None of the above
- 9. Have you ever faced the problem of itchy eyes?
- Yes •
- No

10. Have you ever faced the problem of excessive tears?

- No
- 11. Have you ever had difficulty seeing light?
- Yes
- No
- 12. Have you ever felt sand in the eye?
- Yes
- No
- 13. Has the eye problem affected your daily life?

- Yes



- Never
- moderately
- a lot

14. Have you ever suffered from allergic conjunctivitis?

- Yes
- No
- 15. Do you think eye allergies can affect vision?
- Yes
- No
- 16. Do you think eye allergies can be avoided?
- Yes
- **APPENDIX 2: Participants responses to scale items**

- No
- 17. Do you think eye allergies is a contagious disease?
- Yes
- No

18. Do you feel that it is easy to overcome the problem of eye allergy without taking any treatment?

- Yes
- No

19. Do you think eye allergies can be genetically transmitted?

- Yes
- No

v	variable	Frequency	Percent	
Age	18-28	331	51.7 Per Cent	
	29-39	127	19.8 Per Cent	
	40-50	139	21.7 Per Cent	`
	51-61	39	6.1 Per Cent	
	62 and above	4	0.6 Per Cent	
Gender	male	251	39.2 Per Cent	
	female	389	60.8 Per Cent	H N m
educational level	uneducated	2	0.3 Per Cent	D
	the school	85	13.3 Per Cent	D H A

	the university	553	86.4 Per Cent
nationality	Saudi	613	95.8 Per Cent
	non-Saudi	27	4.2 Per Cent
work nature	inside the building	410	64.1 Per Cent
	outside the building	70	10.9 Per Cent
	both of them	160	25.0 Per Cent

Has the eye problem affected your daily life?				
Never 271 (42.3 Per Cent)				
moderately 309 (48.3 Per Cent)				
a lot 60 (9.4 Per Cent)				

Do you have one of the following diseases? (more than one)					
Frequency Percent					
Diabetes	63	9.1 Per Cent			
High blood pressure disease	46	6.6 Per Cent			
Asthma	55	7.9 Per Cent			
Lupus erythematosus	2	0.3 Per Cent			
Ulcerative colon disease	14	2.0 Per Cent			



Arthritis disease	48	6.9 Per Cent		62 and above	1	r	4
Diseases of the immune system	10	1.4 Per Cent					
None of the above	458	65.8 Per Cent	Total		310	330	640

			Chi-	Square Tes	sts	
Do you have any type of allergy? (r	nore than on	e)				Asymptotic
	Frequency	Percent				
Allergy to dirt	110	14.1 Per Cent				Significance
Allergy to the vaccine	40	5.1 Per Cent		Value	df	(2-sided)
Allergy to a particular type of food	102	13.1 Per Cent	Pearson Chi-Square	16.673 ^ª	4	0.002
Allergy to perfumes	85	10.9 Per Cent	Likelihood Ratio	17.628	Δ	0.001
Allergy to pets	84	10.8 Per Cent		17.028	4	0.001
None of the above	360	46.1 Per Cent	Linear-by-Linear	12.311	1	0.000
			Association	12.511	T	0.000

N of Valid Cases

Chi-square

Crosstab					
	(Count			
			Itchy	/ eye	
			yes	no	Total
age	18-28		213	118	331
	29-39		88	39	127
	40-50		102	37	139
	51-61		21	18	39
	62 and above		1	3	4
Total			425	215	640

Chi-Square Tests					
			Asymptotic		
			Significance		
	Value	df	(2-sided)		
Pearson Chi-Square	9.964 ^a	4	.041		
Likelihood Ratio	9.750	4	.045		
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.021	1	.885		
N of Valid Cases	640				

	Crosstab						
Count	Count						
Excessive tears							
		yes	no	Total			
age	18-28	175	156	331			
	29-39	64	63	127			
	40-50	62	77	139			
	51-61	8	31	39			

Crosstab					
Count					
		Difficult	y seeing		
		lig	ht		
yes no				Total	
age	18-28	193	138	331	
	29-39	76	51	127	
	40-50	95	44	139	
	51-61	18	21	39	
	62 and above	2	2	4	
Total		384	256	640	

640

Chi-Square Tests					
			Asymptotic		
			Significance		
	Value	df	(2-sided)		
Pearson Chi-Square	7.712 ^ª	4	.103		
Likelihood Ratio	7.749	4	.101		
Linear-by-Linear Association	.174	1	.676		
N of Valid Cases	640				

Crosstab						
Count						
	San	d eye				
	yes	no	Total			



age	18-28	143	188	331
	29-39	60	67	127
	40-50	74	65	139
	51-61	17	22	39
	62 and above	1	3	4
Total		295	345	640

Chi-Square Tests					
			Asymptotic		
			Significance		
	Value	df	(2-sided)		
Pearson Chi-Square	4.851 ^ª	4	.303		
Likelihood Ratio	4.885	4	.299		
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.403	1	.236		
N of Valid Cases	640				

Crosstab								
Count	Count							
		Eye	problem daily	/ life				
		never	moderately	A lot	Total			
age	18-28	141	159	31	331			
	29-39	51	68	8	127			
	40-50	55	55 68 16					
	51-61	23	13	3	39			
	62 and			2	4			
	above	1 1 2 4						
Total		271	309	60	640			

Chi-Square Tests					
			Asymptotic		
			Significance		
	Value	df	(2-sided)		
Pearson Chi-Square	15.348 ^ª	8	0.053		
Likelihood Ratio	11.954	8	0.153		
Linear-by-Linear Association	.001	1	0.982		
N of Valid Cases	640				

Crosstab					
Count					
		Alle conjun	-		
		yes	no	Total	
age	18-28	34	297	331	
	29-39	20	107	127	
	40-50	19	120	139	
	51-61	5	34	39	
	62 and above	1	3	4	
Total		79	561	640	

Chi-Square Tests					
			Asymptotic		
			Significance		
	Value	df	(2-sided)		
Pearson Chi-Square	3.499 ^ª	4	.478		
Likelihood Ratio	3.351	4	.501		
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.603	1	.206		
N of Valid Cases	640				

Crosstab					
Count					
	Affect vision				
		yes	no	Total	
age	18-28	273	58	331	
	29-39	109	18	127	
	40-50	115	24	139	
	51-61	34	5	39	
	62 and above	2	2	4	
Total		533	107	640	

Chi-Square Tests					
			Asymptotic		
			Significance		
	Value	df	(2-sided)		
Pearson Chi-Square	4.382 ^ª	4	.357		
Likelihood Ratio	3.596	4	.464		



Linear-by-Linear Association	.010	1	.921
N of Valid Cases	640		

Crosstab					
Count					
		Eye allergi	es avoided		
	yes no				
age	18-28	265	66	331	
	29-39	103	24	127	
	40-50	120	19	139	
	51-61	28	11	39	
	62 and above	1	3	4	
Total		517	123	640	

Chi-Square Tests				
			Asymptotic	
			Significance	
	Value	df	(2-sided)	
Pearson Chi-Square	12.922 ^ª	4	0.012	
Likelihood Ratio	10.775	4	0.029	
Linear-by-Linear Association	.129	1	0.719	
N of Valid Cases	640			

Crosstab						
Count						
		Eye allergy				
		dise	disease			
		yes	Total			
age	18-28	91	240	331		
	29-39	48	79	127		
	40-50	32	107	139		
	51-61	5	34	39		
	62 and		4			
	above	0	4	4		
Total		176	464	640		

Chi-Square Tests

			Asymptotic Significance
	Value	df	(2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13.882 ^ª	4	0.008
Likelihood Ratio	15.259	4	0.004
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.404	1	0.065
N of Valid Cases	640		

Crosstab					
Count					
		Overcom			
		treat	treatment		
		yes no		Total	
age	18-28	114	217	331	
	29-39	33	94	127	
	40-50	33	106	139	
	51-61	10	29	39	
	62 and		2	4	
	above	2	2	4	
Total		192	448	640	

Chi-Square Tests				
			Asymptotic Significance	
	Value	df	(2-sided)	
Pearson Chi-Square	7.792 ^ª	4	.100	
Likelihood Ratio	7.805	4	.099	
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.384	1	.036	
N of Valid Cases	640			

Crosstab				
Count				
		Genetically transmitted		
		yes no		Total
age	18-28	152	179	331
	29-39	69	58	127
	40-50	73	66	139



	51-61	22	17	39
	62 and above	2	2	4
Total		318	322	640

Chi-Square Tests				
			Asymptotic	
			Significance	
	Value	df	(2-sided)	
Pearson Chi-Square	4.124 ^a	4	0.390	
Likelihood Ratio	4.129	4	0.389	
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.907	1	0.088	
N of Valid Cases	640			

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